

DECEMBER
2015

safety Newsletter



December 6-12 is National Influenza Vaccination Week.
An annual flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent this serious illness.

Get yours now!!!

It's Not Too Late for a Flu Vaccine!

As long as flu viruses are spreading and causing illness, vaccination can still provide protection against the flu. Flu activity doesn't usually peak until January or February in the United States, and the season can last as late as May, so it is important to vaccinate now if you haven't already.

CDC's Flu Vaccination Recommendation

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. A flu vaccine offers the best protection we have against this serious disease. Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination.

Get Vaccinated!

Once vaccinated, you can enjoy this holiday season knowing that you have taken the single best step to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu. Get your flu vaccine today!

***For more information visit www.cdc.gov/features/fighttheflu/



FLU PREVENTION TIPS



How Does the Flu Spread?

People who have the flu can spread the virus by coughing or sneezing. Droplets released when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or talks can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. People may also catch the flu by touching their mouth or nose after touching something with the virus on it, such as doorknobs, tables, or an infected person's dirty hand. Wash your hands!

Be Prepared

During flu season, be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a few days. Keep some over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues, and anything else you need so that you do not have to go out while you are sick.

If you are really sick or have other medical conditions or concerns, call your doctor. Your doctor will let you know if you need a flu test, flu treatment, or other care.

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Holiday
Shopping
Safety Tips

Shopping during the holiday season can present unique danger. The holiday season is a time when busy people can become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. Taking a few prevention measures and following these tips can help you be more careful, prepared and aware during the holiday season.

Shopping in Stores

- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Always carry your driver's license or identification along with necessary cash, checks and/or a credit card you expect to use.
- Wait until asked before taking out your credit card or checkbook. An enterprising thief would love to shoulder surf to get your account information.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash
- Pay for purchases with a check or credit card when possible.
- Notify the credit card issuer immediately if your credit card is lost, stolen or misused.
- Keep a record of all of your credit card numbers in a safe place at home.
- Be extra careful if you do carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas.
- Do not buy more than you can carry. Plan ahead by taking a friend with you or ask a store employee to help you carry your packages to the car.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. At this time of year, con-artists may try various methods of distracting you with the intention of taking your money or belongings.

**Shopping Online**

- Before surfing the Internet, secure your personal computers by updating your security software. Everyone's computer should have anti-virus, anti-spyware, and anti-spam software, as well as a good firewall installed.
- Keep your personal information private and your password secure. Do not respond to requests to "verify" your password or credit card information unless you initiated the contact. Legitimate businesses will not contact you in this manner.
- Beware of bargains from companies with whom you are unfamiliar, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- Use secure websites for purchases. Look for the icon of a locked padlock at the bottom of the screen or "https" in the URL address.
- Shop with companies you know and trust. Check for background information if you plan to buy from a new or unfamiliar company.

5 Safety Tips for Holiday
Shopping Online

**For more information on Safe Holiday Shopping visit www.ncpc.org

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Heads Up in Parking Lots



The hectic holiday shopping season means parking lots full of people, safety hazards and the heightened possibility of theft. Follow the parking lot safety tips below to ensure successful shopping trips this season.

Stay Alert: Watch for cars cutting across parking lots and speeding through aisles. Take it slow and always use your turn signal. Avoid two-way lanes whenever possible.

Eliminate distractions: Turn off and stow cell phones. Set up navigation and GPS devices before starting to drive.

Watch for pedestrians: Remain cautious of pedestrians on crosswalks and moving in-between and behind cars. Be alert especially for children who are not always paying attention.

Protect Your Car: Parking in congested areas increases the likelihood of scratches and dents from car doors or shopping carts. Park away from buildings during the day, but avoid secluded areas at night. If you can find a spot at the end of the row next to an island, take it — this is the best place to park your car.

Don't put yourself in a tight spot: Avoid parking between a pair of tall SUVs, minivans or pickups where it might be hard to back out of the space. If you can't see well enough to back out safely, get help from one of your passengers.

Buckle up: Even a low-speed collision can result in injuries. Make sure that everyone is strapped in a seat belt or child car seat while the car is in motion, even if it's just a short trip to another part of the parking lot.

Park in front of a light pole: The pole will protect your car from a driver who might pull too far forward and bash its front end, and the light will give you added security at night.



Walking to and From Your Car

- Carry your purse close to your body or your wallet inside a coat or front trouser pocket.
- Have your keys in hand when approaching your vehicle. Check the back seat and around the car before getting in.
- Do not leave packages visible in your car windows. Lock them in the trunk or, if possible, take them directly home.
- Don't dart between parked cars. Listen for cars and look for the illuminated brake lights of cars backing up. Pedestrians can be just as guilty as drivers when it comes to disobeying posted signs or not paying close enough attention to their surroundings.
- Look up and in the direction where you are going and avoid using your cell phone while walking in the parking lot.

Be Observant

When backing out, make sure you scan a full 360 degrees — there may be shoppers to your left and right, or other cars backing out at the same time. If it's possible and legal in your area, pull through if there are two open nose-to-nose spaces. Being able to pull out head first instead of backing out of a spot will keep you safe.

For more information visit www.aaa.com



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Tips to Safely Deck the Halls

The Holiday Season means road trips, package wraps and ribbons, a fully trimmed tree, and more challenges. Consider these few tips for planning and safety this Holiday Season.

Holiday Decorations and Tree Trimming

- When displaying a tree, cut off about two inches off the trunk and put the tree in a non-tip, water-holding stand. Keep the stand filled with water so the tree does not dry out quickly.
- Place it at least three feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources, and near an electrical outlet. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways.
- If you use an artificial tree, choose one that is tested and labeled as fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.
- Only use indoor lights indoors (and outdoor lights only outdoors). Look for the UL label. Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, and loose connections. Replace or repair any damaged light sets. Never put candles on a tree.
- Use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs, around furniture legs or across doorways.
- Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.
- When displaying outdoor lights, fasten them firmly to a secure support with insulated staples or hooks to avoid wind damage. Never nail, tack or stress wiring when hanging lights and keep plugs off the ground away from puddles and snow.
- Small children and pets may think that holiday plants look good enough to eat, but many plants may be poisonous or can cause severe stomach problems. Plants to watch out for include: mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry and amaryllis. Keep all of these plants out of children's and pet's reach.



Ladder Safety



- When putting up holiday decorations, always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places. Don't stand on chairs, desks or other furniture.
- If you have to use a step ladder near a doorway, lock or barricade the door and post signs so no one will open it and knock you off the ladder.
- A straight or extension ladder should be placed one foot away from the surface it rests against for every four feet of ladder height.
- When you climb, always face the ladder and grip the rungs to climb – not the side rails. Always keep three points of contact on the ladder whether two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.
- When climbing, keep your hips between the side rails and do not lean too far or overreach. Reposition the ladder closer to the work instead.
- Use ladders with slip-resistant feet and wear clean, dry and slip-resistant shoes when climbing a ladder.
- When using ladders outdoors, get down immediately if high winds, rain, snow or other inclement weather begins. Winds can blow you off the ladder and rain or snow can make both the rungs and the ground slippery.

**Visit the National Safety Council at www.nsc.org for more tips